

CONTINENT READERS RECALL

Several years ago The Continent published a remarkable symposium of recollections from its readers who had seen Abraham Lincoln in various situations. Many had conversed with him. We were not able at the time to give space to all the valuable letters received, some of historical value and all of interest. We here present an additional selection.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1861, the regiment to which I belonged was encamped at the Chain Bridge in Virginia, and beside us lay a brigade of Vermont men, all of us but recently from our various homes. As it was only a short time after the disastrous battle of Bull Run and the enemy were known to be near, sleepless vigilance on picket duty, with death as the penalty for failure to keep awake and alert, was a part of our daily instructions. The officer of the day in making the rounds one night found a lad from Vermont fast asleep at his post. His musket was taken from him, a man from the reserve accompanying the officer was put in his place, and he was marched back to camp under arrest. He was tried by courtmartial, found guilty and condemned to be shot. The sentence was approved.

The day appointed for carrying out the order had arrived, a grave was dug in the center of the drill ground, the division was formed in mass to witness the execution of our young comrade who was blindfolded and seated upon his coffin beside the open grave. The firing party with muskets loaded part with ball and part with blank eartridge stood at rest silently awaiting the expiration of the time appointed and the command to fire. Suddenly there was heard the sharp clatter of hoofs on the planking of the bridge, then up the hill from the bridge came a carriage drawn by four galloping black horses, and stopped abruptly in the road beside us. The horses smoking with perspiration. Being one of the musicians who formed on the right of the line nearest the road, I saw at once that the tall man who wore a silk hat and the only occupant of the carriage except the driver was the President. The officer in command approached the carriage and saluted, received a paper from the President, again saluted and returned to his command. The driver turned his carriage in the road and the commander in chief disappeared as silently as he had come. Low spoken commands were passed down the line and parade was dismissed. A man's life had been saved.

Long afterwards, I saw in a school reader a story by Robert Burbank, a professional elocutionist, how a young sister of the condemned had journeyed from Vermont and succeeded in reaching the president just in time for him to act in the manner described. In the spring of 1862 I again saw the same young man, lying mortally wounded at Lee's Mills, near Yorktown, and heard him blessing Abraham Lincoln for the privilege of dying like a soldier and patriot on the field of battle. On my way to the great reunion at Gettysburg in July, 1913, I had as a berthmate on the train from Chicago a former officer of the 6th Vermont, to which the young man mentioned belonged.—R. P., Wisconsin.

I WAS a member of Lincoln's mounted bodyguard from the fall of 1863 until after the close of the civil war. During this service I saw President Lincoln frequently, almost daily during the summer of 1864. Was with him at the battle of Fort Stevens July 12 of that year. I sat on my horse near the

platform from which he delivered his second inaugural address March 4, 1865. I was present at the President's public reception, on the evening of March 8, 1864, and saw him and General Grant clasp hands the first time they ever met. I also heard his last public utterance from a second story window of the White House on the evening of April 11, three days before he was assassinated. I assisted in clearing the street in front of the house where he lay the night of his assassination.—S. S., North Dakota.

WHEN I was a young girl during the winter of 1863, I spent six weeks in Washington. During that visit I saw President Lincoln two or three times. Once it was at the old Ford theater, and in the same box in which he was assassinated a year later. He and Mrs. Lincoln and friends occupied the box. The actor was Edwin Booth, and the play was "Richard III." We occupied the front row of the gallery, and the boxes were high and almost on a level with the President and his party.

Mr. Lincoln's face wore a serious and rather sad expression. His bearing was dignified. He was dressed in a Prince Albert suit. The length of his coat from collar to skirt impressed itself upon my memory. My friends took me to the President's levee, where I shook hands with President and Mrs. Lincoln.—Mrs. P. H. K. M., Kansas.

JANUARY 29, 1865, Lincoln was present in the hall of the house of representatives on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Christian commission. Admiral Farragut sat near Lincoln. Every part of the floor and the galleries was packed. I was in the front row of the gallery. After the speaking had continued for some time the audience began to call for a speech from those whom they saw in the audience—among others, for Lincoln. He arose, and after a word or two asked Philip Phillips, who had already sung several times, to sing a song of which Lincoln was very fond, which he did. Then the crowd began to call for Admiral Farragut. As soon as the calls began the blood mounted to Farragut's face until he blushed like a young maiden. He finally got up and bowed, but did not speak.—I. G. K., District of Columbia.

I HAD the honor to look into the face of Lincoln during his presidency. My wedding occurred April 24, 1864, in a town not far from Cleveland, Ohio. Having journeyed from that city to New York, news that our regiment of one-hundred days' men had been ordered to the front and with them had gone as drummer boy a lad but 14 years old, in whom we were interested, we decided to extend our trip to Washington.

One evening, having been informed that a disbanded regiment would be greeted by the President, we waited on the White House porch until near midnight. Down the avenue music sounded, and presently the soldiers thronged into the mansion. Thus I found my chance. A lady, amid such a throng, at such an hour, was welcomed with a gracious

smile. The kindly voice said, "I am glad to see you," while my hand was in his strong clasp—a meeting, and a greeting never to be forgotten. What greater honor could a bride desire?—E. L. C., New York.

DURING my three years of service in the civil war I had the pleasure of seeing Abraham Lincoln many times and really meeting him twice. The first meeting was when I was a wounded patient at Carver Hospital, Washington, D. C., about May 15, 1863. He came through the hospital and shook hands with us. My bed being the last one toward the door, he stopped a while to talk. The surgeon introduced me as "The man we took the bullet out of his leg the other day." The next time I saw him one year later. One afternoon he drove down to the foot of Sixth street at the landing where I was on duty. He got out of his carriage and started to walk down to the dock, when the guard stopped him and he stood there until I, only a corporal in the invalid corps, with the wave of the hand and an order to the guard, permitted the commander in chief of the army and navy to pass. After going down to the dock and standing there, gazing out over the Potomac in deep thought he strolled back to his carriage.—F. U., Ohio.

BEING in Washington during the summer of 1863 on detached service, and acquainted with the captain commanding the President's escort, I rode with him frequently from the White House to Soldier's Rest, where Lincoln went for the night. It was during the battle of Gettysburg that Mr. Lincoln asked me, on reaching Soldier's Rest, to "Come in." He asked me to sit down and talk to him, tell him about camp life, the march, etc. When I rose to go, he rather insisted that I should stay. Afraid of tiring him I rose again to go when he said: "If you have to go on duty you must, of course, go; but if you can, stay." And then he told me he could not sleep, but walked the floor, and that it was a favor to have me talk to him.

I saw something of him during that summer, but never heard a story from his lips: and have marveled much in the years since then of his being represented as a story teller on every occasion.—W. B. C., Connecticut.

IN 1860 I was a student of Antioch College near Zenia, Ohio. Following Mr. Lincoln's election he journeyed eastward, stopping at various points, including Zenia. As I could not get through the dense crowd I ran around it to the front of the car and upon hands and knees crept its length to the rear. Then suddenly rising I stood nearest Mr. Lincoln, who was speaking from the end of the car. A hand caught my collar to pull me down and to maintain my position I reached out both hands and held Mr. Lincoln's knee. As I was pulled Mr. Lincoln was pulled. He looked down, a broad smile illuminating his face, grasped me by the hand and said, "Hold on!" which I did until the car started.

I enlisted on the first call, April, 1861, receiving a commission in "Wool's Body Guard," afterwards the 1st New York

THEIR GLIMPSES OF LINCOLN

mounted rifles, stationed at Fortress Monroe. I recall accompanying the command to the boat to receive Mr. Lincoln and escort him to General Wool's headquarters. In the winter of '64 and '65 I was at City Point and met Mr. Lincoln upon his visit to General Grant, and commanded an escort accompanying Mr. Lincoln and General Butler along the Richmond front. It was an anxious trip. Confederate sentinels were in plain view and the President was an easy target.—E. A. H., New York.

IN THE spring of 1863, while the Potomac army lay at Falmouth, Virginia, Mr. Lincoln and wife came to review the troops. The second corps was drawn up in long lines by divisions and each division general with staff escorted the President through his own command. It was a most impressive sight, as vivid now as things of yesterday. Hancock and staff passed his division, followed by Lincoln riding alone. The general presented an imposing appearance—a superb figure, mounted upon a splendid thoroughbred. Horse and rider seemed one personality, so complete was the harmony of their movements.

Lincoln rode a heavy set, rather squatty horse, but of a graceful and easy gait. The President's long legs were drawn up as though his stirrups were much too short, his thighs almost horizontal. He crouched well down in the saddle, the skirts of his frock coat flapped in the wind, his arms moved up and down as he held the reins, and his tall stovepipe hat was set well down and back upon his head. He turned quickly from side to side, viewing the troops with the eagerness of the man, who had the distress of a great nation upon his heart.—S. C., Florida.

PREVIOUS to the civil war the election for governor in Connecticut took place in the spring. Fresh from his joint debates with Stephen A. Douglas, that had given him a national reputation, Lincoln was announced to make an address in Norwich, during the campaign for state officers. I went to the meeting out of curiosity to see the "rail-splitter." Contrary to my expectation Mr. Lincoln had spoken but a few words, when, young as I was, I found myself listening with almost breathless interest.

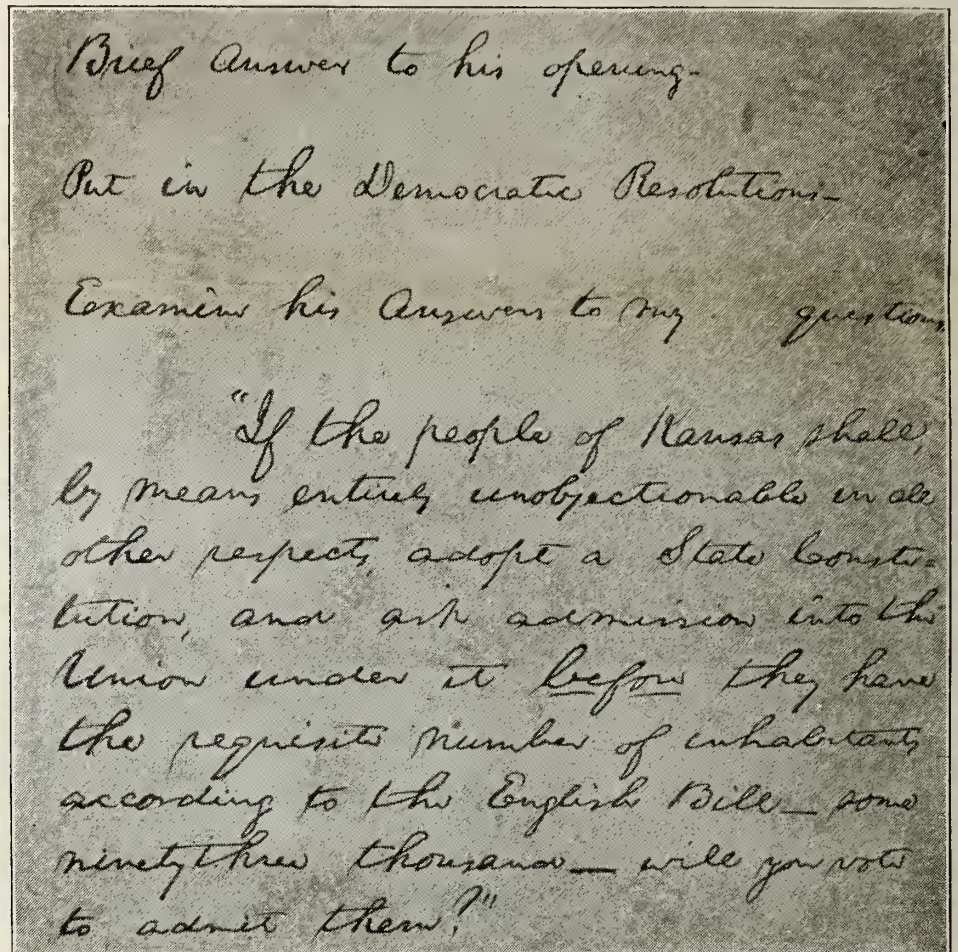
After speaking for nearly two hours he vainly endeavored to close, and yielding to insistent cries to "Go on," he spoke for a half hour longer, holding his audience to the end. The chairman, after expressing the appreciation of those present, said that "as for himself he hoped that the Republican national convention would honor itself by nominating our tall friend from Illinois as its candidate for vice president. This was considered at the time a marked compliment to the speaker of the evening.—G. W. H. New York.

DURING the fall of 1858 I was in Monmouth, Illinois. (I was then a licentiate in the United Presbyterian Church.) I heard Mr. Lincoln at Oquawka on Saturday afternoon. That evening he went down to Burlington by boat and spent the Sabbath there. Monday morning I came out to Oquawka Junction and took a train for Monmouth. Mr. Lincoln was on that train on his way to Monmouth, where he spoke that afternoon. In the coach I was seated just across

the aisle from him, and I observed him with much interest, as the Lincoln-Douglas senatorial campaign was then on. Some gentlemen who had been talking to Mr. Lincoln soon left him, and he was left to his own meditations. Presently his lips moved as if he were speaking, and a smile spread over his face. I fancied he was framing some quip for Mr. Douglas when next they met. In both these speeches he expounded his famous declaration that the nation could not endure half slave and half free, and that a house divided could not stand. His voice was worn from much outdoor speaking, but his manner was animated, and his face very engaging. I have never listened patiently to

plied, "you cannot beat me on the rough."—E. F. S., Pennsylvania.

IMAGINE the vivid picture impressed on my mind when a boy in my teens of Lincoln reviewing the Army of the Potomac after the battle of Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862. The infantry was drawn up in dress parade, forming a line three miles long on a series of ridges, while at certain intervals the batteries took their position. The reviewing group of President Lincoln and General McClellan and his staff passed before this great army on horseback in a brisk walk. The President was riding a medium sized horse which, with short saddle stirrups, made it



This is one of the notes made by Mr. Lincoln for his speech at Freeport, Illinois, August 27, 1858. It includes the first of the questions asked his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas, at that time. The reproduction is from the original, hitherto unpublished, among the papers of the late Mrs. Caroline Owsley Brown of Springfield, Illinois.

the saying that Mr. Lincoln was "homely." He has never been "homely" to me.—W. J. M., Ohio.

I SAW Abraham Lincoln in 1860 at Schenectady when he was on his way to Washington. He came to the rear platform to greet a large body of students of Union College and citizens who had gathered at the station. He had nothing to say but smiled and waved his hand as the train moved off.

I saw him again when as President he came into the corridor of the house of representatives Sunday morning, April 21, 1861, to welcome the first defenders, five companies from Pennsylvania, which had responded to the call for troops for the defense of the capitol.

When the captain of the Pottsville light infantry, with which I went to Washington, was introduced, President Lincoln said: "I want to shake every man by the hand," to which the captain replied: "Mr. President, you will find them pretty rough." He re-

necessary for his long legs to be too much akimbo for an easy and graceful riding posture. This, with his frock tail coat and tall black stovepipe hat gave him a singular appearance, a marked figure among the military uniforms of the reviewing group.—W. D. P., Ohio.

I FIRST saw Lincoln at beautiful Pleasant Valley, where the Army of the Potomac was encamped after the battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862. Early in October he spent three days with the army. As he moved among the soldiers in and out of their tents he was everywhere received with loud huzzas and many manifestations of welcome, for all the soldiers loved him, and he gave them helpful, sympathetic words. As I remember he wore a black suit and a tall silk hat and his long, gaunt, ungainly form was not as attractive as those of the finely dressed officers around him, but he was the central figure of the entire group.—C. H. M., California.